US Army Corps of Engineers ®

Safety FLASH

CHAIN SAW SAFETY

Chain Saw Safety

Here are some helpful tips on using a chain saw to clean up debris after a storm. The chain saw is a time saving and efficient power tool. It can be unforgiving and lethal, however, causing injury or death in the hands of a uninformed and unaware operator. It is not the chain saw causing the accidents or injuries but the environment in which it is used.

Read your safety manual that came with your chain saw.

If you are going to help clear tree and wood debris, you should wear at least:

A helmet system (consisting of head, face and hearing protection)

Leather gloves and a pair of chain saw protective work boots with steel toes

Chain saw protective chaps or chain saw protective pants (UL Listed)

Read your owner's manual concerning kickback. To reduce the risk of kickback injury:

Use a reduced kickback bar, low kickback chain and chain brake

Avoid contact between the bar tip and any object

Hold the chain saw firmly with both hands

Do not over-reach

Do not cut above shoulder height

Check the chain brake frequently

Follow sharpening and maintenance instructions for the chain saw

Make sure that your chain saw has these features, and that the features are working:

Chain brake (manual or inertia)

Chain catcher

Working **safety** throttle switch

Working on/off switch

Spark arrester

Fill a gas-powered chain saw when the engine is cool.

If the saw is out of gas, let it cool 30 minutes before refueling.

Do not smoke when refueling the saw!

Look out for hazards!

Broken or hanging branches, attached vines, or a dead tree that is leaning. All of these hazards can cause the chain saw operator to be injured.

If you have to cut a dead tree, be very careful! The top could break off and kill you.

If the tree is broken and under pressure, make sure you know which way the pressure is going. If you're not sure, make small cuts to release some of the pressure before cutting up the section.

Be careful of young trees that other trees have fallen on. They act like spring poles and may propel the chain saw back into your leg.

Carry the chain saw with the engine off.

Never cut when tired or alone.

Most woodcutting accidents occur late in the afternoon when most people are pushing to finish up for the day. Always work with a partner but never around children or pets.

Use a chain saw from the ground level only, not on a ladder or in a tree.

You should have a preplanned escape route.

It should be at a 45° angle from the projected direction of a falling tree. Make sure there is nothing that could trip or stop you from making a quick retreat.

If you follow these basic tips you can avoid preventable injuries.

Be Safe, Share The Ways!